Best Management Practices for Construction and Development Projects
Illinois Chorus Frog

Pseudacris illinoensis

Common name • Illinois Chorus Frog
Scientific name • *Pseudacris illinoensis*
Federal status • None
State status • None

Purpose and Use

The information in this document is to be used to help avoid and minimize species impacts due to construction practices. It is not intended as a guide to manage habitat for a given species. Please contact the Department of Conservation if habitat management information is needed. Because every project and location differ, following the recommendations in this document does not guarantee impacts will not occur to the species and additional information may be required in certain instances. Following the recommendations in this document does not complete Endangered Species Act consultation that may be necessary for species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act; please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for more information.

Ecology

Illinois Chorus Frogs are a species of conservation concern found in west-central and southwestern Illinois, southeastern Missouri, and northeastern Arkansas. In Missouri, they historically preferred open, sandy areas, but most of the habitat is now cultivated fields (soybean, corn, and cotton). Illinois Chorus Frogs are the largest chorus frog, with large, muscular forelimbs used for digging in sandy substrate. Their color may vary from light tan to tan-gray with a distinct V-shaped marking between the eyes, a dark stripe from the snout to the shoulder, and a dark spot below the eye. Most of this frog's life is spent burrowing in the sand, emerging from the sandy substrate in late winter (typically late February through early April) to breed in flooded fields, roadside ditches or other temporary, fishless bodies of water. Females typically lay 400+ eggs and tadpoles develop into frogs after about 60 days. Adults range in length from 1-1.6 inches. Illinois Chorus Frogs eat various small insects, spiders, and burrowing insect larvae.

Reasons for Decline

Illinois Chorus Frogs historically inhabited the former sand prairies, and associated wetlands of southeastern Missouri. However, as this unique habitat has been eliminated, so has much of the Illinois Chorus Frog population. In addition, continued draining and clearing of wetlands in southeastern Missouri have greatly reduced breeding habitat of this species. It is possible that increased exposure to herbicides and pesticides will cause further declines in populations of the Illinois Chorus Frog and other amphibians and reptiles.

Specific Recommendations

Illinois Chorus Frogs appear to be tolerant of agricultural land if breeding sites exist in the area. As do many amphibians, Illinois Chorus Frogs require different habitat conditions at different stages in their life cycle. From the time eggs are laid until the tadpoles develop into frogs, these amphibians require temporary pools. As adults, Illinois Chorus Frogs require loose, sandy soil for burrowing. For these reasons, it is important to protect all sand prairie habitat and associated temporary pools within the range of this species.

- Draining or destroying known wetland habitat should be avoided.
- Erosion and sediment controls should be strictly implemented, monitored, and maintained for the duration of the project.
- Avoid removing or destroying unique habitat features, such as downed trees, that provide habitat for reptiles and amphibians.
- Avoid altering water levels and regimes in wetlands or seasonally flooded areas within the range of the Illinois Chorus Frog.
- Disposal of wastes and garbage should be done in designated areas far from wetlands.
- Avoid physically or chemically removing or altering the vegetation in the 100-foot buffer around wetlands or seasonally flooded areas.
- If application of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers in or near seasonal wetlands is necessary, carefully follow all label directions and consider application of more wildlife and wetland friendly herbicides and pesticides

General Recommendations

Refer to Refer to *Best Management Practices for Construction and Development Projects Affecting Missouri Rivers and Streams.*

If your project involves the use of Federal Highway Administration transportation funds, these recommendations may not fulfill all contract requirements. Please contact the Missouri Department of Transportation at 573-526-4778 or the Missouri Department of Transportation Environmental Studies webpage for additional information on recommendations.

Information Contacts

For further information regarding regulations for development in rivers and streams, contact:

For species information:

Missouri Department of Conservation
Science Branch
P.O. Box 180
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180
Telephone: 573-751-4115

For species information and Endangered Species Act Coordination:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services
101 Park Deville Drive, Suite A
Columbia, MO 65203-0007
Telephone: 573-234-2132

For Clean Water Act Coordination:

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Water Protection Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
Telephone: 573-751-1300, 800-361-4827

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Regulatory Branch
700 Federal Building
Kansas City, MO 64106-2896
Telephone: 816-389-3990

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EPA Region 7 Water Division
11201 Renner Boulevard
Lenexa, KS 66219
Telephone: 913-551-7977

Disclaimer

These Best Management Practices were prepared by the Missouri Department of Conservation with assistance from state and federal agencies, contractors, and others to provide guidance to those who wish to voluntarily act to protect wildlife and habitat. Compliance with these Best Management Practices is not required by the Missouri wildlife and forestry law nor by any regulation of the Missouri Conservation Commission. Federal laws such as the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act, and state or Local laws need to be considered for construction and development projects and require permits and/or consultation with the appropriate agency. Following the recommendations provided in this document will help reduce and avoid project impacts to the species, but impacts may still occur. Please contact the appropriate agency for further coordination and to complete compliance requirements.